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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how English language learners (ELLs) are provided for in the U.S. public school system and whether they are receiving an equitable education. It focuses on: the development of assessment and accountability in the education of ELLs; the education of ELLs in San Francisco, California, whether there was great controversy over how to educate and evaluate these students; measuring growth in English by tracking students' development in English itself rather than using standardized tests; teaching ELLs (there has been little inservice or preservice training for current or future ELL teachers, although university teacher training programs nationwide are beginning to address the issue and inservice teacher training is being developed to promote the success of all students); the role of high school counselors (who can assist ELLs through the educational system and appropriately advise and inform them); English as a Second Language standards, which are necessary in order for counselors, teachers, parents, and students to all be on the same page; and the future of English language development (with a concrete set of standards specific to ELLs in place, the next step in securing educational equity is to ensure that educators are familiar with the standards and their implementation). (Contains 14 references.) (SM)

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English Language Learners:

An Issue of Educational Equity

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Introduction

The notion of education for ALL is not a new concept, but one that surfaced congruently with the development of our nation and our educational system. The father of education, Horrace Mann, promoted education as a birth right to those living in the colonies. Thomas Jefferson advanced the growth of common schools by setting a precedent in which all children would have the opportunity to partake in the first three years of their schooling for free (Gutek, 1991). As our educational system has developed, unique groups of students have captured educators attention and stimulated great debate. As a result, our ideas of educational equity have taken shape.

Last year one of seven children in the United States spoke a language other than English (Abedi, 2001). At the turn of this century there were approximately 4.2 million English language learners in the country and of these 4.2 million students, 80% of them were partaking in specialized instructional programs. (Butler, & Stevens, 2001). With such numbers, English language learners (ELLs) have provoked special attention on both local, state, and national levels. In staying rigorous to the American commitment to educate all, recent topics of concern deserving of attention are: How English language learners (ELLs) are provided for and are they receiving an equitable education in the public school system?

Assessment and Accountability

The concept of accountability is one that has resurfaced this decade. In holding districts, schools, teachers, and the students accountable for academic achievement, a standard form of measurement is mandated. In the educational realm this tool of measurement is usually some form of a standardized state achievement test. The National Assessment of Education Progress, or NAEP, first administered such a test in 1969 (Stansfield, 1998). According to Stansfield, the tests were "designed to serve as a monitor of school achievement in the core areas of reading, writing, math, and science, and in other areas as well" (Stansfield, 1998, p.1). Typically administered in grades four,

eight, and twelve, the results of the tests were to be used by the state and school district to note growth or declines in student achievement (Stansfield, 1998). At first, it was a common practice to excuse English language learners from taking these tests. By the mid 1990s some states were testing their second language learners, but not many. Forty-four of 48 states with assessment programs accepted exemption from ELL students in one or more standardized assessment and 27 of these 44 states regularly excused these students (Stansfield & Rivera, 2000). Exemptions such as these were problematic for a few reasons. First, with no reports on how ELLs were doing academically, no one was being held accountable for the achievement of these students to ensure that they were meeting the specified educational standards. Secondly, the issue of equity arises. If there is no "standard" of measurement concerning student achievement, the possibility of English language learners being tracked or placed into programs in which they didn't belong became a realistic concern.

The issues of accountability and educational equity were somewhat resolved in 1994 with the Improving America's School Act, in which all students would be held to the same standards. With the inclusion movement gaining momentum it was believed that all students "should be included in state and district assessment programs and that comparable information about student progress should be obtained for students who are excluded for educational or psychometric reasons" (Butler & Steven ,2001, p.410). As a result, English language learners who had once been dismissed from high stakes tests were now required to take the them. Such an action only sparked new debates and a different set of equity issues.

Now that English language learners were going to be involved in standardized testing, the validity and reliability of their test scores became of concern. Not only were the tests designed with the native English speaker in mind, but the content of the test and the state standards were not always aligned (Butler & Stevens, 2001). This produced skewed results. For students learning English as a second language the time needed to

read and process the material was not added in, and the test essentially becomes a measure of reading proficiency, rather than an indicator of achievement within the core curriculum. Therefore, the results weren't reliable indicators of what the student truly knew. It was entirely possible that a student had a more firm grasp of the material but was unable to express their comprehension of the subject due to the obvious language barriers. With the scores of English language learners incorporated into the schools overall profile, many schools and districts were worried that this was an unfair disadvantage not only to the school, but more significantly to the students themselves.

A Situation Arises in San Francisco

Through the early 1990's California students with less than 30 months of English instruction were still excused from high stakes testing (Trousdale, Peneul, & Khanna, 1999). Through much debate and opposition, Republican Governor Pete Wilson, pushed to get rid of the California Learning Assessment System, CLAS, an achievement test which focused on measuring "student's basic and complex thinking skills through their completion of performance tasks" (Trousdale et al., 1999, p. 6). Arguing this measurement incompetent, due to a lack of individual performance statistics in core subjects such as reading and math, Governor Wilson promoted a test that would provide individual test scores. With an election year on the horizon, Governor Wilson focused on accountability and felt that all students needed to be represented in state wide achievement measurements. The spotlight was certainly on English language learners, Spanish speakers in particular, although there were numerous other languages the California public school system had to contend with.

After great opposition, Governor Wilson signed a bill in 1997 mandating all students take the California standardized assessment (Trousdale et al., 1999). Democrats were specifically outraged by this action as Wilson went against his agreement to exempt English language learners that had received English instruction for two years or less (Trousdale et al., 1999). San Francisco School District Superintendent Waldemar Rojas

refused to administer the test to his English language learners that had received less than 30 months of English instruction. Reviving the argument of validity, Rojas stressed that assessing ELLs via a state standardized test was not an accurate way to measure the students' content knowledge, but simply their language acquisition, which was not the purpose of such an assessment. He felt that his students' 14th Amendment rights were being violated as stipulated in the "Equal Protection" clause. In turn, Governor Wilson argued that leaving specific groups of students out was inappropriate, and that "the test is needed in English so as to foster the goals of including English language learners within the broader society" (Trusdale et al., 1999, p.8).

Despite Superintendent Rojas's refusal to give the test to all of his students, Governor Wilson was not phased. If Rojas wouldn't administer the test to all of the students within the San Francisco school district, the state would simply withhold the school districts funding, close to 12 million dollars (Trusdale et al., 1999). Wilson continued to campaign for inclusion and stressed the significance in establishing a system of measurement to gauge the achievement of all students, thus being able to insure that English language learners were not only held to the same standards as other students, but meeting them (Trusdale et al., 1999).

On March 28, 1998, San Francisco schools filed with the federal courts a civil rights lawsuit stating that the California achievement test, the STAR, was not a fair assessment to give second language learners as it violated the 1974 Equal Educational Opportunities Act (Trusdale et al., 1999). Opponents to Governor Wilson's inclusion agenda felt the STAR was an unjust assessment as, "students who speak limited English are discriminated against, singled out and treated differently because they are being tested on math, science, and social studies in a language they do not understand" (Trusdale et al., 1999, p. 12). By June of that same year Judge David Garcia declared the San Francisco school district victorious. Consequently, a temporary restraining order was placed on releasing all test scores until those scores of students classified as limited

English proficient (LEP) were removed. The withholding of scores was only temporary, and Judge Garcia had the restraining order eventually removed. ELL scores were made available but were not to remain in an English language learner's permanent record.

Testing Modifications and Accommodations for the English Language Learner

The 1994 Improving America's School Act outlined that all students in Title I programs were to partake in standardized achievement tests. In order to comply, by 1999 most institutions were implementing some sort of testing accommodations for their students of limited English proficiency (Stansfield & Rivera, 2001). While English language learners were receiving accommodations, they were similar in nature to adaptations provided for students with disabilities (Stansfield & Rivera, 2001). Still an area that deserves further research, four forms of testing accommodations have been stipulated for ELL's with varying degrees of success:

Extra time is one such accommodation (Stansfield, 1998; Butler & Stevens 2001). The opportunity to have more time to work on a test is most helpful to English language learners that already posses proficiency in English. As this student's reading speed is slower than that of a native speaker, extended time allows the student to adequately process the information. While such an accommodation did indicate an increase in scores for some ELL's, it was not deemed a significant increase (Butler & Stevens, 2001). In addition, when considering a student of emerging English, this is not an appropriate accommodation, as more time is of little consequence to a student who can't read English.

Making the students comfortable, a second modification, encompasses a variety of adjustments. When taking a standardized achievement test, ELLs are often given the opportunity to take the test in a room they are familiar with and have the test administered by a teacher they have worked extensively with, such as their English Language Development (ELD) instructor (Stansfield, 1998). The testing schedule is also more flexible. English language learners are able to take their assessment over an

extended number of days. Possibly the most substantial adjustment made to level the playing field for ELLs is the stipulation that testing directions may be repeated by the instructor and or directions can be clarified (Stansfield, 1998). Stansfield stresses that such an accommodation, in simplifying the language of the test, not only helps learners developing English language acquisition but is an adjustment that keeps the test results valid, not offering ELLs an unfair advantage (Stansfield & Rivera 2001). Research conducted in 1993 by Cunningham and Moore found that the ELL's "performance was significantly increased when 'testing language' was modified" (as cited in Butler & Stevens, 2001). Additional findings concerning standardized test scores by the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing concluded that the gap between ELLs and nonELLs lessons, almost to the point of disappearing, on math items such as computation that do not require advanced language proficiency skills (Abedi, 2001).

Some facilities allow the use of bilingual dictionaries and glossaries. This is the third modification. While some research suggests this is an acceptable adaptation there is no substantial evidence that allowing these extra resources is beneficial. Butler and Stevens noted gains among the test scores of ELLs who used bilingual dictionaries and glossaries, but the increases were not statistically significant (Butler & Stevens, 2001). Stansfield and Rivera also noted gains in ELL scores when provided with a glossary and extra time, but such an accomidation raises the question of validity (Stansfield & Rivera, 2001). Extra language tools such as bilingual dictionaries and glossaries may be providing an unfair advantage to English language learners as they have the opportunity to look up words that are specific to areas of content knowledge, not simply language development.

A fourth and final possibility explored is to provide English language learners with the same state assessment but in the student's native language. This is a costly alternative and as of 1998 was only offered in Arizona, California, Hawaii,

Massachusetts (Spanish only), New York, Rhode Island, and Texas (Stansfield, 1998). One of the dilemmas in offering a translated version of a standardized test is that it is only helpful to students who are proficient in their native language. There are varying levels of English language acquisition and ELLs are typically at different stages in their language development, so determining who is eligible for a translated test becomes an issue as well. The actual translation of an assessment is another consideration. While content can be transferred, idiosyncrasies of the language are embedded within the test, and translations by default are not rigorous to the original format. Testing in the subject of English Language Arts is particularly problematic as grammatical and syntactical rules vary from language to language. In addition some translations are much more accessible than others. For instance, providing an alternative form in Spanish is relatively easier than providing one in Farsi. As a result, some students within the English language learning community itself are given unfair advantages over others based on one's native language. Finally, if the test is completed in a learners native language, finding individuals with the appropriate qualifications to accurately score the assessment provides yet another deterrent in allowing ELLs to take a translated version of an achievement test.

A variety of adjustments can be made during standardized achievement tests for English language learners. However, different accommodations are most appropriate for different ELLs depending on their stage of language development. Data surrounding the academic growth of English language learners is particularly difficult to interpret when considering there is no real consistency from state to state concerning a student's classification, or stage, of language development. A second inconsistency is coupled with the accommodations themselves. Different states are implementing different strategies to level the playing field for their second language learners, some requiring all ELLs, regardless of their English proficiency level, to participate in statewide achievement testing, others allowing exemptions for those students still developing

English language acquisition skills. In addition, accommodations in testing "have been implemented with good intentions, but without an empirical base that demonstrates whether using them makes any significant difference" (Butler & Stevens, 2001, p. 414).

Measuring Growth in English

An alternative to measuring the academic achievement and growth of English language learners through standardized testing is to track their development in English itself. This strategy can be used in conjunction with the standardized tests enforced by the state, or on its own. California, Illinois, and Texas have all designed assessments with the specific goal of determining the development of an ELL students language acquisition. The assessment in California is closely aligned to the state's English Language Development (ELD) standards. In Illinois, students who have only been privy to ELD services for six months to three years are exempt from the state content assessment. Instead, the IMAGE, Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English, is taken by students in grades 3-11, ages 9-17, who receive ELD instruction (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000). Such an assessment provides a much more accurate description of student achievement and allows for more conclusive evidence to determine if English language learners are receiving proper access to the appropriate curriculum content.

Teaching English Language Learners

While the validity and reliability of the tools used to measure academic growth and achievement among English language learners is debatable, in order to ensure educational equity it is necessary to determine if ELLs are receiving access to the curriculum content. Few states mandate preservice training for future ELL teachers and school district sponsored professional development targeting English Language Development is often sporadic. Thus, it is not surprising to learn that "In general, the United States teaching force is not well prepared to help culturally diverse children succeed academically and socially" (Clair, 2000, p. 2).

Monolingualism has been and continues to be the goal of English acquisition.

Such pro-English only attitudes can be traced as far back as the early 19th century and Noah Webster who "argued that 'a national language' was the 'bond of national union'" (Gutek, 1991, p. 36). As educators rush to stimulate English acquisition skills within their English language learners, language development skills with the native languages of these students is often overlooked. With no substantial connections between first and second languages, students are loosing out academically. Research continues to, and has for decades supported the "advantages of bilinguals, and which policies and practices constitute optimal bilingual education programs (Waters, 2000, p. 6). Regardless, the public education system has not consistently fostered mastery in non-English native languages.

Not only is a distinct separation made between a native and newly acquired language, the instructors themselves of English language learners are often their own distinct departments. As a result, English Language Development instructors tend to be isolated from the content area teachers. Rather than establish student centered ELD classes, the instructional delivery tends to be teacher centered focusing on the components of language such as grammar, phonology, and syntax (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000). Instead, English language development should be viewed from a more collaborative stance where English is a focus for communication, a device necessary for socialization (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The functions of the English Language Development instructor are unique. Like all teachers, the ELL instructor needs to be equipped with standard effective teaching tools such as secure classroom management, content knowledge and expertise, and the ability to organize meaningful lessons. On top of being expected to evaluate the numerous levels of language acquisition of their ELL students, the ELD instructor must be able to communicate with and understand his or her students. Most importantly, ELD teachers are responsible for scaffolding content so the students are provided with an education comparable to the native speakers across the hall. Scaffolding the curriculum

content, or sheltering it, does not mean watering down the knowledge. Instead, it is the teacher's responsibility through use of material variety, instructional methods and additional lessons, to bring the state mandated curriculum to the level of the English language learners (Clair, 2000). In addition, the ELD instructor must do this in a manner that promotes socialization within the classroom and provides insight into the "cultural norms" existing within the American language and culture (Clair, 2000).

The challenges in teaching English language learners are not without rewards, but cumbersome, especially without proper training. "Historically, preparation programs for foreign language and ESL teachers have placed emphasis on instructional methods rather than on the what, why, and who of second language instruction" (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000, p.3). With haste to produce for standardized tests, great focus has been placed on establishing proficient English skills. It is disturbing to note this has occurred at the cost of pushing the learners away as individuals, and the process of language acquisition is in turn compromised.

University teacher training programs across the nation are beginning to address the task of effectively preparing teachers to properly instruct English Language Learners. Consequently, more states are beginning to incorporate successful completion of such a program as a requirement for teacher certification. The University of Minnesota has developed the "Second Languages and Cultures" (SLC) Education Program for its prospective teachers (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000). SLC incorporates course work as well as field experience. Course work includes an exploration of "language and culture; the language learner; integration of curriculum, instruction, and learner characteristics; theory and research bases for second language teaching and learning; school culture and second languages; personal development as a teacher; assessment; language and cultural diversity; (and) research" (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 4). In addition, all students conduct their field work in both an elementary and secondary classroom setting. In both instances English language learners make up a

substantial proportion of the classroom population. What is especially unique about the SLC program at the University of Minnesota is the training that continues once the prospective teachers have been placed within a classroom of their own. With the beginning of the school year, once a month these first year teachers, many of whom are instructing ELL's, meet with their fellow UM collegues and continue to discuss and share effective English Language Development strategies.

San Diego State University, along with a number of other California State universities, offers the CLAD, Cross Cultural Language Academic Development, certification program. The program aims to promote cultural awareness, theoretical knowledge, content knowledge, and knowledge of pedagogical methods (Gonzalez & Darling- Hammond, 2000). The course work for the CLAD incorporates specialized instructional methods specific for sheltering content knowledge for the English language learner. These strategies are classified as SDAIE, or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English, are woven into the methods courses required of prospective teachers. The purpose of SDAIE is to equip teachers with effective methods of instruction allowing them to shelter content knowledge appropriately while "providing English learners access to the curriculum" (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000, p. 4). A field work component is also required within the CLAD certification. Here future teachers are placed in a classroom in which the master teacher is CLAD certified or has obtained some other type of comparable language development certification, and the students within the classroom are predominately second language learners (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000).

The above mentioned university programs are two excellent examples of progression towards better educating English Language Development teachers and essentially making more secure the issue of educational equity for English language learners. However, there are many ELD teachers already in the classroom conducting a group of ELL students, who have been forced to learn on the job how to best reach their

students. The ELD instructor's responsibility for ensuring the ELL's access to the curriculum is huge, especially considering that English language learners don't make up one ability grouping. There are not only a variety of native languages and cultures primary to this group of students, but a wide range of proficiency levels, and varying points of entrance into the educational system (Clair and Adger, 1999). In light of this situation it is apparent that substantial professional development programs are necessary. Typically educators are not at a loss in selecting some type of beneficial professional development workshop. The problems for ELD instructors and support staff is that too often the workshops pertaining to the development of English language acquisition are hit and miss. As outlined by Clair and Adger, districts need to establish some type of plan of continual staff development that correlates with the vision of the school (Clair and Adger, 1999). Topics of discussion should include language development, the role one's native language plays in the development of a second language, and how to combine content knowledge with instructional strategies providing access to the curriculum (Clair and Adger, 1999). According to research conducted by Harvley and Valli (as cited in Clair, 2000), workshops offered for the English Language Development educator are often disconnected to classroom happenings. As a result, they suggest that professional development be long term, provide teacher and student centered activities, teach goals that will stimulate student performance, be school based, promote collaborative and problem solving skills, develop theoretical understanding, provide clear steps toward change, and incorporate knowledge about language acquisition (Clair, 2000). Clair continues by suggesting one way to meet such a tremendous task is through "teaming school personnel who provide professional development with university faculty or others with expertise in applied linguistics" (Clair, 2000, p. 3).

Principals must take an especially active role in seeking out continual opportunities for the staff to enhance their understanding of language acquisition and stay current on research and teaching practices specific in reaching English language learners.

Most importantly the principal must promoting an environment in which all teachers share the responsibility of educating their ELLs, and aiding them in language acquisition. Assisting English language learners is not the sole responsibility of the English Language Development teachers and the Language Arts Department.

Both staff development programs and university programs offer specific teaching strategies that are most effective in the ELD classroom. Specific instructional strategies are developed in a manner that focuses on providing equal access to the content by means of sheltering the instruction. There is no magical formula in providing access to content for second language learners and many of the strategies outlined and discussed are arguably good teaching practices for any group of students.

Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond specify three strategies that are key in sheltering instruction for your ELLs. First and foremost instructors need to "start at the beginning", meaning check for prior knowledge and build on what the students already know and connect it to the newly presented information (Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 2000). In doing so teachers must be conscious of social experiences and make a concerted effort not to assume students have experienced something specific or unique to the local culture. Secondly instructors need to break down all information, tasks and assignments included, into sequential steps (Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 2000). In doing so a clear outline of where the lesson is going is established for the learner and he or she is thus better able to focus on the content of the lesson and more able to retrieve information gained during instruction. Lastly, it is recommended that ELD instructors explicitly model all necessary steps for completion of a task in addition to providing examples of final products (Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, 2000). Similar to providing a sequence for the lesson, modeling and providing concrete examples again allows students to focus on the content and limits confusion that arises due to differences in language proficiency.

A study done in five elementary schools in Los Angeles, California outlined four strategies that proved to be particularly effective when teaching literature to English

language learners. Literature units are particularly powerful in developing English and "is believed to help students learn to comprehend text, make connections between the text and their own lives, and develop more fully formed concepts about the themes addressed in the units" ("Promoting Successful", 1999, p. 3). The students attending these schools were participating in a transitional bilingual program, and 80% of the children were classified as Limited English Proficiency, LEP, students ("Promoting Successful", 1999). As already noted in research done by Gonzalez and Darling-Hammond, this study also found building on a students' prior knowledge to be an essential component in literature studies (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond 2000; "Promoting Successful", 1999). In building on what a student already knows, the English language learner was found to better grasp new vocabulary embedded within the text, understand the themes of the story on a more meaningful level, and thus experience greater success in the understanding the content itself ("Promoting Successful", 1999). The second strategy found to be effective among the Los Angeles elementary school children, was to connect the content to the students' personal experiences ("Promoting Successful", 1999). Connecting new knowledge to personal experiences is an effective way to promote authentic learning and also helps stimulate recall at a later date. Literature extensions through writing and discussion is the third strategy found to promote literature studies among ELLs ("Promoting Successful", 1999). Because most of the second language learners in this study were Spanish speakers, literature units allowed for readings in both Spanish and English. In implementing the third strategy, students were encouraged to incorporate their own experiences, connecting to them to the literature, in their writings and then share them with their classmates ("Promoting Successful", 1999). The final suggestion outlined is to assist the ELL's in rereading key passages ("Promoting Successful", 1999). This not only serves as a reading model for the students, but focuses them on the content of most importance for the lesson. In implementing these four strategies, despite language acquisition challenges, the English language learners are given access to the

content. These strategies thus prove to be of significance in that they establish an equitable education for these second language learners.

Direct instruction is crucial in teaching literacy skills to all students, and English language learners are no exception ("Promoting Successful", 1999). Read-alouds, pleasure reading in both a student's native language and in English, and interactive journals are all activities conducive to direct reading instruction as concluded in the study of five elementary schools with an 80% LEP population in Los Angeles, California ("Promoting Successful", 1999). It was also noted that "when teachers used both literature logs and instructional conversations with LEP 4th, and 5th graders, the student understood the story better than when the teacher used only one of the techniques" ("Promoting Successful", 1999, p. 6). However, this did not hold true for students with higher levels of language proficiency. Students who were classified as FEP, Fluent English proficiency, did not make statistically significant gains in achievement when both literature logs and instructional conversations were used ("Promoting Successful", 1999). In this case, instructional conversations that focused on the literature contents themselves and explicit explanation of reading strategies used to withdraw content proved to be more successful with FEP students.

High School Counselors

Traditionally teachers have been the focal point in reaching English language learners. The effect teachers have on their students and the responsibility placed on their shoulders in assisting their students through the processes of language development is powerful. Yet, teachers are not the only educators that have a responsibility in ensuring educational equity for second language learners. While the teachers may continue to be held responsible for providing access to the curriculum content, High School counselors need to become part of the educational equality equation for English language learners in the secondary setting. It is their job to assist ELLs through the educational system and appropriately advise and inform them not only of their post high school opportunities, but

the necessary steps needed to reach their goals.

In states such as California, Illinois, and Minnesota, programs have already been established at the university level that prepare future teachers in educating English language learners (Gonzalez & Darling-Hammond, 2000). Yet there is no such program anywhere that requires a formal certification for high school counselors. This is especially problematic because high school counselors are responsible for advising ELLs on their post high school path. With little to no training concerning the stages of language development, the counselors cannot be providing a just pallet of choices for the second language learners that seek out their assistance. Assistance, or lack there of, for post high school options is not the only area counselors fall short in providing equal access to second language learners. Without the proper training, high school counselors aren't consistently placing English language learners in the proper language classes either (McCall-Perez, 2000). In both cases educational equity is absent.

Unlike their native English speaker classmates, English language learners don't generally seek out the services of their high school counselors. As a result, high school second language learners are often enrolling themselves in courses that aren't suitable for their desired outcomes upon high school completion (McCall-Perez, 2000). This situation proves fatal noting that "these students are less likely than their native born peers to have other means of gaining information essential to their schooling decisions" (McCall-Perez, 2000, p.13).

These disturbing conclusions by McCall-Perez were based on their findings within the high schools of two school districts in northern California, those of Hayward and Salinas, both with substantial ELL populations (McCall-Perez, 2000). Upon sharing their results, they were able to work with the high schools and their counselors in an effort to better educate the counselors and in an overarching endeavor to ensure educational equity for secondary English language learners. McCall-Perez's study revealed that after sitting in English Language Development classes some counselors

"were surprised to note that they had greatly misjudged the levels of English proficiency of their own advises" (McCall-Perez, 2000, p. 16). Once counselors are schooled on proper ELL levels and appropriate placement, not only will the students experience more academic success, the teachers themselves would not be as frustrated because their students will be in the correct language classes. Ultimately McCall-Perez found that counselors needed guidance concerning specific curricula content, teacher instruction, linguistic levels, individual academic background information concerning the specific English language learner, and the ELL's future plans (McCall-Perez, 2000). With such elements in place, high school counselors will be better equipped to guide their English language learners on their post high school choices, and in properly placing them within language and content courses.

English as a Second Language Standards

In order for counselors, teachers, parents, and students to all be on the same page, a set of standards would need to be established specific to second language acquisition. Stipulating that all students were to be held to the same standards, the Educate America Act of 1994 prompted the development of standards for English language learners. Standards for all curriculum content areas were to serve as a guide for the development of state and local curricula (Short, 2000). Originally, English Language Development was not considered a unique content area. Rather, all of the content areas combined, specifically Language Arts, would take up meeting the needs of English language learners. In 1993, TESOL formed a task force that succeeded in creating a framework establishing "all educational personnel to assume responsibility for ELLs and demands that schools provide these students with access to all services" (Short, 2000, p. 2). By 1995 the ESL standards began to take shape and in 1997 ESL Standards for Pre-K through 12 grade were published (Short, 2000). The framework consisted of nine standards which were organized under three main goals: "To use English to communicate in social settings, to use English to achieve academically in all content areas, (and) to use

English in socially and culturally appropriate ways" (Short, 2000, p. 3). The responsibility of establishing benchmarks and levels of proficiency were left to the state boards. With a set of ESL standards in place two significant goals were achieved. First, there was now an understanding among educators as to what it is to learn a second language and second, requirements for language content through a second language had been established.

The Future of English Language Development: Where are We Headed?

With a concrete set of standards specific to second language learners in place, the next step in securing educational equity for English language learners is to ensure that educators are familiar with the standards and are implementing them. One way to assist in implementing the ESL standards concerns the adoption of the standards by textbook companies (Short, 2000). As textbook companies create appropriate materials for our English language learners and align the books to the ESL standards, we will find ourselves one more step closer to ensuring equal access to the curriculum.

Teachers, with the help of university teacher preparation programs and on going staff development, must continually promote high standards for the English language learners in their classrooms. As soon as the standards are lowered, dropped, or overlooked, our ELLs are presented with a disservice that will follow them far outside the classroom doors. Staying current with research and understanding language acquisition and the development there of is of particular importance. Continuing to implement innovative strategies to better reach second language learners is key as well. In order to achieve these goals, cooperation between English Language Development instructors and content area instructors will be key. Principals and counselors will need to take a very active role in establishing a school environment in which such collaboration is fostered.

Accountability and high stakes testing is currently motivating much of the educational legislation and earning play in the media. For this reason appropriate testing accommodations for English language learners in crucial. As stated in findings by Butler

and Stevens, it is of particular importance that we are better able to determine when and if a student has reached appropriate proficiency levels in English and are thus able to take high stakes test (Butler & Stevens, 2001). The notion of testing all ELLs regardless of their language levels not only agitates ELL advocates, it has instilled a deep sense of injustice to others where these results are used to monetarily reward teachers and schools who earned significant gains on these assessments. California is one such state in which the schools and teachers are awarded with additional funds when they demonstrate a significant increase in student achievement as illustrated by the states standardized test (Butler & Stevens, 2001). With this in mind, considerable more research needs to be conducted concerning the appropriateness and effectiveness of testing accommodations.

With a distinct set of ESL standards in place, and certification programs and requirements centering around the interests of the English language learners we are continually moving towards a more equitable education for our second language learners. However, it cannot be ignored that with all the advances, accommodations, and adjustments made within the classroom and the state to national level, we are still promoting a monolingual learning experience that holds English in the highest regard.

Some may question if equality will ever be possible unless the nature of a monolingual educational system shifts to one that not only embraces a variety of languages, but actively fosters the development of such languages, moving towards bilingualism and even trilingualism. Educational equity may never be reached in its purest sense for the English language learner. However, the strides we make towards equity as well as the steps taken backward are always fueled by various political agendas and fought out in the political arena. In spite of this educators must continue to strive not only for educational excellence, but for educational equality. Within our classroom walls is by far the best place in which to carry out such a mission.

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